

[**Hawkins High Junior Prom '59**](#) by [**CiderApples**](#)

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Summary:

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Inspired by the tweet.

Hawkins High Junior Prom '59

Despite having spent way too much time at the high school this week, the reigning detention king of Hawkins High returns to the parking lot after dark.

He parks in the back, away from the lights, and watches the girls wander in with their dresses on, fixing each other's straps and rubbing lipstick off their teeth.

He's not here for prom. He feels no need to wander around the gym dressed up like a monkey in a suit; he's just here to smoke in the dark parking lot like a normal person. He happens to be wearing a silk shirt because it looks sharp, and feels nice on his skin. He bought it with his construction earnings because a man has to own a few nice shirts. For occasions. He's got three long-stem roses on the dash of his GTO because maybe he likes flowers, and Mrs. Bozey down the street grows them for show, and he's a little loose in the morals. And he's got a pack of cigarettes because he's thinking of taking it up. Seems like it might be nice.

He takes one out, sticks it in the side of his mouth and lights it. It tastes... earthy. Not great. Not awful. He coughs for about a minute straight, and stubs it out.

He peers intently out the window, slowly leaning further and further toward the windshield as a fog descends.

Joyce passes by at 8:16pm, not a hundred feet from his car.

She goes inside on Lonnie's arm, which is no surprise. That's what she said she was going to do, if he didn't play nice with her stupid ransom list of demands. She couldn't actually have expected him to do all that ridiculous stuff. Rent a suit? Meet her dad? Yeah, right. He had to draw a line somewhere.

Let Lonnie do it, he'd said.

From the looks of things, Lonnie had.

Joyce is gone in a minute. She disappears through the warm gym doors, and Hop's getting cold.

It's been real nice, sitting and watching the monkeys fill out the circus, enjoying a smoke, but maybe he's ready to go.

He puts his seat back up and smashes his box of cigarettes into the glovebox and all of a sudden someone bangs on his window with an open hand. He swears as he rolls it down, until he looks up.

"I'm not here for prom," he says.

Joyce eyes him. "Okay?" she says. Her eyes drift to the flowers just as he remembers they're there. "You have flowers," she says.

"For my mom," he says.

"Okay." She waits. "Can I...come in?"

He huffs, but leans across the car and banks the door open. She slips in like a shadow. It's way quieter in the car with her inside it.

"You want to smoke?" he asks.

"You smoke?"

He slaps at the glovebox until it opens and tosses the mangled pack into her lap. She handles it, turns it over, and looks at him in surprise.

"We smoke the same kind," she says, half question, half statement.

"Weird."

She offers him one. He puts out a hand to refuse. “Just had a few,” he explains. It goes over without a blink, but a few seconds later she’s staring at him like he’s missing something. “Got a light?” she asks, expectant. He tries not to dig the lighter out too quickly.

She pulls on the flame he makes and his face goes slack and rapt. Her smoke fills the car. It’s going to stick to his upholstery and never come out.

“So,” he says, with a bone-dry tongue. “How’s Lonnie?”

She shrugs and picks a speck of tobacco off her tongue. “He’s good.”

“Good dancer?”

She rolls her eyes. “Yeah, I guess,” she says. She stares out the window — not toward prom but toward the football field, toward the bleachers — and swiggles down into a comfortable slouch. He puts his seat back again. They watch nothing.

“Hey, Hop?” she says, eventually. It feels like she’s been here the whole night but she’s not even done with that one cigarette.

“Yeah?” He’s starting to feel prickly, everywhere. The shirt is making him sweat.

“You really hate these things, huh?”

At first he thinks she means the smokes. “Uh, no,” he gets out, before he realizes she’s talking about prom. “Oh, what, prom? Yeah, hate it. I mean, no judgement.” He waves his hand casually through the air, where his judgment would be if he had any. “Just not my thing.”

She nods. Her dress crinkles. He loves that fucking dress. She’s worn it every holiday but Christmas. She takes care of it. She takes care of things.

“But *you* like them,” he says. “Dances, and stuff.”

She shrugs again, with a tiny, possibly insecure smile. “I guess.”

He can’t stand even the hint of insecurity on her. “Well, you look

great,” he says, which turns her smile up enough to get that worried feeling off his back.

“Thanks.” She smooths out the tulle over her knees, making pleats where there aren’t any. Pea green is maybe the worst color he’s ever seen on anyone. She’d picked it herself.

“I mean, you really look great.”

“*Thanks, Hop,*” she says, a little more sarcastic this time. She takes one last drag on the cigarette and jams the butt into his ashtray. “And thanks for the smoke.”

He smiles and does that slow nod he’s seen on TV. “No problem,” he says. “Anytime.”

She kind of sort of rolls her eyes again and whooshes out of the car in a cloud of skirt, but she comes around to the driver’s side before she goes. Hop’s heart starts to hammer. Her fingers curl lightly over the half-downed window, leaving little condensation halos where they touch.

“You’ve got a year til we’re both seniors,” she says. “So get the fuck over it.” Then she’s off, tripping across the parking lot in her tiny lime-green one-inch heels.

Hop sucks cool air through his open window until the blood stops drumming in his ears.

Once it has, he pulls out a cigarette and lights it, determined to finish the whole damn thing.